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ABSTRACT

The Texas Assessment of Basic Skills (TABS) helps to improve basic skills mastery by assessing student achievement and district performance levels in reading, writing and mathematics. TABS was designed to provide information for instructional planning in the state-funded compensatory education service. Minimum competency objectives are to be measured by criterion referenced tests at third, fifth and ninth grade exit levels in each curriculum. Individual student performance is presented through Confidential Student Reports, which the teacher interprets to the student and his or her guardian. Campus and district aggregate performance and demographic summary reports are also available. TABS results should be reported to the Board of Trustees, the staff, and the public. TABS results will be useful to district superintendents, curriculum specialists, principals and teachers. A long-range curriculum planning model is used to illustrate the TABS instructional improvement procedure. A generic scoring guide for writing is appended. (CM)

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INTERPRETING ASSESSMENT REPORTS— TABS 1982

TABS

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TABS: an overview

The Texas Assessment of Basic Skills (TABS) is a program for basic skills improvement that includes an annual assessment of student achievement in reading, writing, and mathematics. It is designed to provide information which can be used in planning instruction for students in these three curriculum areas. State compensatory education funds have been allocated to provide compensatory instructional services. The TABS tests were developed especially for Texas schools and were reviewed, revised, and renewed by groups of Texas educators.

The State Board of Education has given emphasis to the improvement of student achievement in mathematics, reading, and written composition by establishing improvement in these areas as one of its priorities. The State Board has set as a target for increasing student achievement that by 1983, 85 percent of students completing high school will demonstrate minimum exit level mastery of essential mathematics and reading objectives, and that by 1985, 85 percent of students completing high school will demonstrate minimum exit level mastery of essential writing objectives. The State Board of Education calls upon all school districts in Texas to assist in moving toward these targets by giving emphasis to this priority.

The first TABS tests were administered in February and March of 1980 to more than 433,000 fifth and ninth grade students in Texas public schools. Almost 725,000 students were tested in 1981 when third grade students were included in the assessment cycle. During the third testing cycle, conducted in February of 1982, approximately 800,000 students were tested with criterion-referenced tests which are based upon learner objectives considered essential for all Texas students. Included in the total number tested were third, fifth, and ninth grade students and a number of tenth and eleventh graders who had not demonstrated mastery of the competencies during previous testing cycles.

TABS background

TABS was developed in response to several directives. The State Board of Education has the responsibility under Texas law to "review periodically the educational needs of the state, adopt or promote plans for meeting these needs, and evaluate the achievement of the educational programs." School districts are required to conduct a documented student needs assessment as part of the accreditation planning process. Senate Bill 350, passed by the 66th Texas Legislature, amended Section 16.176 of the Texas Education Code (TEC) as follows:

> Beginning with the 1979-80 school year, and each year thereafter the Central Education Agency (Texas Education Agency) shall adopt and administer appropriate criterion-referenced assessment instruments designed to assess minimum basic skills competencies in reading, writing, and mathematics....

Criterion-referenced tests

The instruments to be administered were specified as *criterion-referenced tests* (CRT), i.e., instruments that relate test items to specific learning objectives or levels of proficiency in skills which students are expected to have mastered. A student's performance on each objective is measured. A CRT is not designed to compare students with each other or with a selected "norm" group, as is the case with norm-referenced tests. Since CRT's measure specific objectives, they are useful in instructional planning. Areas of high and low student performance are easily identifiable, and remedial programs focusing on areas of weakness can be devised.

The TABS tests

At all three levels—grade 3, grade 5, and exit level—the TABS instruments measured three curriculum areas: mathematics, reading, and writing (composition). The tests measured minimum competencies expected to be mastered by virtually all students.

The exit level tests were administered to ninth graders, as specified in the Texas Education Code, so that students might have three additional years to correct achievement deficiencies. The law provides that all ninth grade students not demonstrating mastery of minimum exit level competencies "...shall be given the opportunity to retake the assessment instrument each year the assessment instrument is administered." In 1981, students not mastering the exit level tests were eligible to be retested for the first time.

Mathematics

At all three levels students were tested on mathematics concepts based on selected objectives.

Each objective was measured with four multiple-choice items.

Mathematics objectives measured on TABS tests[1]

Grade 3

- Read and write four-digit numbers (word or numerical form)
- Arrange a group of three whole numbers from the greatest to least and least to greatest (up to three digits)
- Find the sum of one-, two-, or three-digit numbers, with two or three addends, with or without regrouping
- Subtract numbers having as many as three digits, with or without regrouping
- Solve word problems involving addition or subtraction of whole numbers
- Complete a number pattern involving multiples of two, three, four, five, and ten
- Find the product of two one-digit numbers with one factor less than six
- Use pictorial models to identify halves, thirds, or fourths
- State the value (up to $5.00) of a given set of coins and bills
- Select the unit of measurement to determine weight/mass, liquid volume, length, and time

[1]*For further details on the objectives and measurement specifications, see "Texas Assessment of Basic Skills, Objective Specifications for Mathematics, Reading, and Writing, Grade 3, Grade 5, and Exit Level," Publication CU1 832 01, which may be obtained from the Publications Distribution Office, Texas Education Agency, Austin, Texas.*

Grade 5

- Identify by name geometric terms and figures
- Demonstrate the ability to interpret place value
- Add a column of numbers where regrouping is required
- Perform subtraction using whole numbers with regrouping
- Multiply a whole number less than 1,000 by a whole number less than 100 where regrouping is necessary
- Find a quotient with or without remainders
- Solve word problems involving addition and/or subtraction using whole numbers and/or decimals involving money
- Solve word problems involving multiplication and division of whole numbers
- Select the unit of measurement to determine weight/mass, liquid volume, length, temperature, time
- Read and interpret mathematical information displayed on graphs
- Use pictorial models to identify equivalent fractional parts of objects or sets of objects
- Arrange a group of whole numbers from largest to smallest or from smallest to largest

Exit Level

- Add and subtract whole numbers where regrouping is required
- Multiply and divide whole numbers
- Solve problems using the basic operations
- Add, subtract, and multiply fractions and mixed numbers
- Add or subtract, multiply, and divide decimal fractions
- Solve problems involving income, banking, cost comparisons, and taxes
- Determine total dollar amounts and/or correct change from a specified amount
- Use the basic operations to solve problems involving measures
- Solve problems involving ratios, proportions, and percents
- Use maps to determine approximate distances or locations
- Read and interpret mathematical information from a chart or graph

Reading

The reading instruments at all three levels included multiple-choice questions testing objectives deemed essential for all students.

Each objective was measured by four test items. Some items were based on reading selections, others were not.

Reading objectives measured on TABS tests

Grade 3

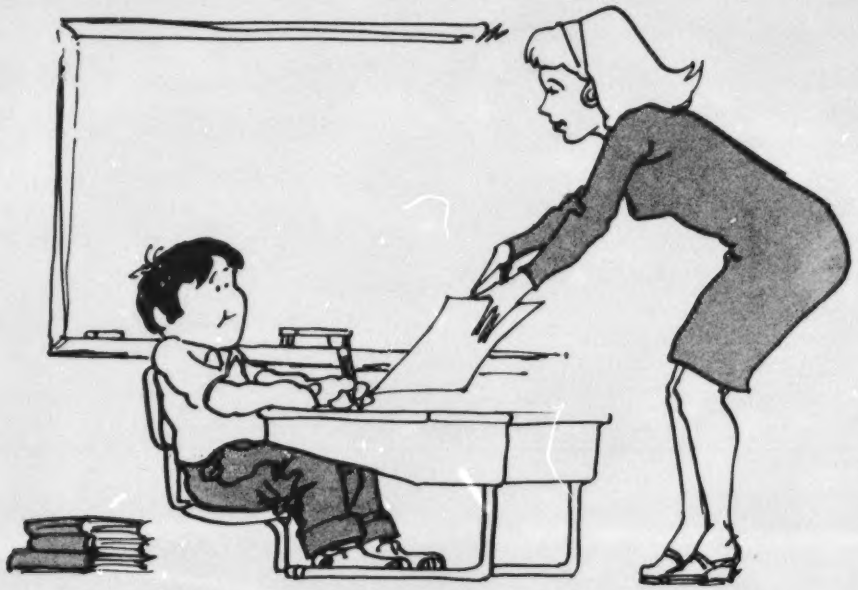
- Identify the main idea
- Comprehend accurately the details in a reading selection
- Arrange a list of events in sequential order
- Follow a set of written directions
- Recognize words through phonic analysis
- Use context clues
- Use word structure to identify words
- Recognize words by sight

Grade 5

- Identify the main idea
- Recall specific facts and details
- Arrange a list of events in sequential order
- Distinguish between fact and non-fact (opinion)
- Draw logical conclusions
- Predict probable future actions or outcomes
- Use context to understand the meaning of words
- Use an index to locate information
- Use maps and charts, graphs and schedules to get information
- Follow a set of written directions
- Explain and relate to the feelings and emotions of characters

Exit Level

- Identify the main idea
- Arrange a list of events in sequence
- Perceive cause-and-effect relationship
- Evaluate and make judgments on the basis of information given
- Distinguish between fact and non-fact
- Make inferences and draw logical conclusions
- Arrive at a generalization from a given series of details and/or assumptions
- Follow written directions involving subordinate steps
- Use the various parts of a book as aids in locating information (e.g., title page, table of contents, preface, and index)
- Use various sources as aids in locating information (e.g., dictionary, telephone book, encyclopedia, newspaper)
- Use graphic sources to get information (e.g., tables and lists, charts and graphs, maps and globes, pictures and diagrams, scale drawings, transportation schedules)



Writing

Measuring the Writing Skills

The writing portion of the TABS tests is divided into two parts. The first part is composed of multiple-choice items that test the components of writing. Responses to these items provide one measure of the student's competence in judging correctness in the writing of others—correctness in the mechanics or conventions of writing.

The second part of the test consists of a written composition to assess the student's competence in organizing ideas in writing and responding appropriately to purpose and audience. (Third grade students are not expected to respond to audience.) The student's handwriting is also assessed by the written composition.

[1]For a more detailed description of the writing scoring process, see the following documents: "Texas Assessment of Basic Skills, Focused Holistic Scoring of TABS Writing Samples, Exit Level," and "Texas Assessment of Basic Skills, Focused Holistic Scoring of TABS Writing Samples, Grades 3 and 5" which may be obtained from the Division of Curriculum Development, Texas Education Agency.

Writing objectives measured on TABS tests

The writing test at each of the three levels consisted of two parts—multiple-choice questions and a writing sample. The multiple-choice items on each test measured the following objectives:

Grade 3
- Demonstrate the correct spelling of commonly used words
- Demonstrate knowledge of standard punctuation
- Demonstrate knowledge of standard uses of capitalization
- Demonstrate knowledge of correct English usage
- Demonstrate the ability to control sentence structure

Grade 5 and Exit Level
- Demonstrate the correct spelling of commonly used words
- Demonstrate knowledge of standard punctuation
- Demonstrate knowledge of standard uses of capitalization
- Demonstrate knowledge of correct English usage
- Demonstrate the ability of control sentence structure
- Demonstrate the ability to correct commonly used forms

In addition to the multiple-choice items, each student was asked to write on a given topic. The objectives measured by the writing sample[1] were:

Grade 3
- Organize ideas in writing
- Respond appropriately to the topic specified in the stimulus
- Use legible handwriting for effective communication

Grade 5 and Exit Level
- Organize ideas in writing
- Respond appropriately to purpose and audience in a given writing situation
- Use legible handwriting for effective communication

The writing tasks

Individuals write to accomplish basic aims or purposes that are primarily persuasive, informative, or expressive. A *persuasive* task requires the writer to present reasons in support of a point of view with the ultimate intention of influencing a particular audience to take a desired course of action. *Informative* writing, also referred to as explanatory or referential, calls upon the writer to select or arrange details so that information can be conveyed effectively and correctly. An *expressive* writing exercise draws upon the writer's imaginative ability to invent and connect details to express ideas or feelings.

The three purposes described above do not generally occur in isolation. For example, a persuasive task might rely on expressive discourse or the presentation of information to convince someone of something. However, one purpose is generally primary with the others serving subordinate functions. For the TABS tests, writing items are designed to isolate and focus, as much as possible, on a single, overall purpose; this purpose is clearly stated or implied in the writing exercise.

A writer's purpose can be accomplished through three methods or modes of organization: narration, description, and classification. *Narrative* writing sequences events in some form of chronological order, such as relating a story or listing the steps that might be taken to complete a particular task. Writing in the *descriptive* mode paints a picture, in effect, so that an image can be recreated in the reader's mind. *Classification* calls for the writer to group elements on the basis of their characteristics; these groups or categories may be formed according to various attributes. Common examples of classification include defining or comparing and contrasting objects and events. While each of the three modes can be identified as an isolated entity, they do not generally occur separately in written discourse; for example, a narrative may also include description or a description may also classify. For purposes of TABS testing, an attempt is made to cue students to a dominant mode so that they will emphasize that particular mode in their responses.

For the three TABS testing cycles completed to date, students have been assessed with writing tasks having the purposes and modes of organization indicated:

GRADE 3

Year	Purpose	Mode
1980	(Not Tested)	
1981	Expressive	Narrative
1982	Informative	Descriptive

GRADE 5

1980	Expressive	Narrative
1981	Persuasive	Descriptive
1982	Informative	Descriptive

EXIT LEVEL

1980	Persuasive	Descriptive
1981	Persuasive	Descriptive
1982	Informative	Classificatory

Scoring the written compositions

A process called focused holistic scoring has been developed for use in the Texas Assessment of Basic Skills to assess student performance on the written composition portion of the test. The scoring procedure is "holistic" because it considers the total piece of writing; it is "focused" because it evaluates the writing in terms of pre-defined objectives, thus making it criterion-referenced.

All holistic scoring is based on the concept that a valid assessment of writing depends upon the examination of a sample of writing as a totality, not merely as a collection of parts. Such scoring takes into account all of the aspects of a piece of written discourse—syntax, word choice, expression of ideas, coherence, and organization—which a writer employs to accomplish a given

writing task. In first draft writing elicited in TABS, problems with language conventions, such as punctuation and spelling, are considered only if they are so serious that they interfere with the communication of the writer's ideas.

Criteria used in focused holistic scoring come primarily from the Essential Writing Objectives established by the Agency and available in Publication GEO 832 02. More concrete scoring criteria are based upon the elements of effective writing that are specific to a given writing exercise. In addition, the scoring criteria also take into consideration both students' developmental capabilities and constraints imposed by the testing situation. This means that students are not penalized for writing in those ways that are appropriate for a certain age and developmental level, such as stringing short sentences together in the early elementary grades. Likewise, students are not expected to perform in ways that might be considered unreasonable within a testing situation where they are submitting first-draft writing that addresses an assigned topic which must be completed within a short period of time.

A student's written composition is scored by trained readers and assigned a score of 0-4. A generalized scoring guide, describing the characteristics of writing assigned each score point 0-4, is printed on the test report folder and the Appendix of this document.

Mastery levels

In each of the three subject areas a mastery level was set for all objectives measured by multiple-choice items. To master an objective, a student must answer correctly at least three of the four items testing that objective.

In addition, the State Board of Education established a mastery level for each of the three exit level tests. Section 16.176 of the Texas Education Code specified:

> All ninth grade students who fail to demonstrate mastery of minimum exit level competencies shall be given the opportunity to retake the assessment instrument each year the assessment instrument is administered.

For the reading or mathematics exit level test a student demonstrates mastery of the total test if he/she answers correctly at least 30 of the 44 items appearing on the test.

A different method was utilized to compute mastery for the writing test. Because of the importance of the writing sample, the score obtained by the student on that exercise was weighted more heavily than the score on the multiple-choice items.

The total score for the exit level writing test was determined in the following manner:

1. The *total* number of *items correct* on objectives 1-6 (those measured by multiple-choice questions) was divided by 3 and rounded to the nearest whole number, to obtain a *converted score.*

2. The *raw score* earned on the writing sample was multiplied by 4 to obtain a *converted score.*

3. Both converted scores were added together to obtain the *total writing score.* To have met the mastery criterion for the writing test, a student must have attained a total writing score of at least 13 points. Since a score of 2 on the written composition represents the minimum level of competency expected to be attained at the exit level of high school, at least 8 of the total writing score points must come from the written composition.

$$\text{Total Writing Score} = \frac{\text{Multiple-Choice Items Correct}}{3} + 4\left(\text{Written Composition Raw Score}\right)$$

Interpreting the confidential student report Grade 3, 5, and Exit Level

Confidentiality of results

A Confidential Student Report has been provided for every student who took one or more of the TABS tests. According to Sec. 16.176 of the Texas Education Code: "The results of individual student performance...are confidential and may be made available only to the student, the student's parent or guardian, and to the school personnel directly involved with the student's educational program."

Reports of mathematics, reading, and multiple-choice portion of writing

A confidential student report for the exit level test is shown in Figure 1. Columns 1, 2, and 3 apply to grade 3, grade 5, and the exit level reports. In column 1, each of the *objectives* tested is listed in its appropriate *basic skills area.* Column 2 indicates *mastery*, "yes" or non-mastery, "-." To master an objective a student must have answered correctly at least three of the four test items measuring each objective. Column 3, *items correct*, displays the number of items (0-4) answered correctly by the student. If a student answers correctly less than three items for an objective, the student did not demonstrate mastery of this skill on the TABS test.

For the mathematics and reading tests and for the multiple-choice portion of the writing test (objectives 1-6), the *total* number of *objectives mastered* and the *total items correct* are also listed.

For the exit level tests only, mastery or non-mastery on each total test is shown in Column 4 on the exit level confidential student report in the boxes entitled *demonstrated mastery of minimum exit-level...competencies.* If the student is retaking the test, the word "retest" will appear below each appropriate box.

Report for the written composition

The section labeled 'Written Composition" includes two parts. The first part contains a score assigned to a student's written composition. Each student's paper was read independently by two trained scorers, who assigned each paper a *raw score* ranging from 0 to 4. If the two scores did not match, the paper was given to a third scorer for resolution. The previously discussed "focused holistic" method was used in scoring the papers and all scorers were trained to use this process, utilizing a scoring guide which listed criteria for each score point[3].

The second part contains a description of a student's handwriting as: "acceptable," "hard to read," "illegible," or "not ratable." A student obtained a "not ratable" designation if there was no response to the topic or the answer was too brief for the handwriting to be evaluated. (Example: "I don't know.")

[3]*See Appendix for a general description of these criteria.*

Interpretation of a confidential student report—An example

When analyzing Patti Smith's test results, shown in Figure 1, the teacher should examine:

—*The objectives that Patti mastered*

- For example, on the mathematics test Patti did not experience difficulty with the four basic mathematics operations nor with reading and interpreting maps, charts, and graphs.
- Likewise, on the reading and writing tests, Patti's teacher can discern from the mastery column (Column 2) the areas in which Patti performed well.

—*the objectives that Patti did not master and her areas of greatest need*

- By studying the *mastery* column, Patti's teacher can locate those objectives which Patti did not master. By checking the *items correct* column (Column 3), Patti's areas of "greatest need" as determined by the TABS test can be found.
- For example, in mathematics Patti's teacher may want to test her more extensively on fractions, and ratios/percents and to provide remediation.
- Patti's area of "greatest need" in mathematics appears to be solving personal finance problems; she did not answer any of the four items correctly. Her teacher should refer to the specifications for this objective[4] to determine the skills necessary to master the objective and the content to be tested. Then Patti's teacher can devise a further test of Patti's knowledge of personal finance. If he wants his diagnostic instrument to match TABS in item format, he should refer to the TABS sample items[5], which are test questions similar in format to those found on TABS.
- In reading, Patti's teacher should obtain more information on her performance in those areas which she did not master.
- In writing, Patti did not master two of the objectives measured by multiple-choice questions. In addition, she obtained a raw score of 1 out of a possible 4 points on the written composition; a score of 2 represents the minimum level of competency expected to be attained at the exit level of high school.[6] First, her teacher should refer to the written composition scoring guide[7], which describes the characteristics of papers with each score point. The next step should be to test Patti more extensively on the type of writing measured by the TABS test. Examples of a writing exercise with its scoring guide and sample papers are found in the document *Texas Assessment of Basic Skills, Focused Holistic Scoring of TABS Writing Samples, Exit Level.* Depending upon the results of this further assessment and the fact that Patti did not master the objectives on "correct English usage" and "sentence structure," Patti's teacher can decide what types of additional practice or instruction she should receive in order to raise her writing performance to the minimum competency level.

[4] *Found in "Texas Assessment of Basic Skills Objective Specifications for Mathematics, Reading, and Writing, Grade 3, Grade 5, and Exit Level," TEA Publication CU1 832 01, Publications Distribution Office, Texas Education Agency.*

[5] *See "Texas Assessment of Basic Skills, Sample Test Items, Grade 5 and Exit Level," Division of Curriculum Development, Texas Education Agency.*

[6] *See page 7 for details.*

[7] *Found in the Appendix of this document or on the Text Report Folder.*

TEXAS ASSESSMENT OF BASIC SKILLS

CONFIDENTIAL STUDENT REPORT

STUDENT: SMITH, PATTI
DATE OF BIRTH: 7-14-67
STUDENT ID. 000001

DISTRICT: 001-901 BLUEBONNET ISD
CAMPUS: 001 EASTERN HIGH
CLASS GROUP: TOM BROWN

REPORT DATE: MAY 1982
DATE OF TESTING: FEBRUARY 1982
GRADE: 9-EXIT LEVEL

BASIC SKILLS AREAS	OBJECTIVES (1)	MASTERY (2)	ITEMS CORRECT (3)	(4)
MATHEMATICS	1. Add/Subtract Whole Numbers	YES	4	
	2. Multiply/Divide Whole Numbers	YES	4	
	3. Solve Problems: +, -, ×, ÷	YES	3	
	4 Use Fractions, Mixed Nos. to +, -, ×	—	2	DEMONSTRATED MASTERY OF MINIMUM EXIT LEVEL MATHEMATICS COMPETENCIES
	5 Use Decimals to +, -, ×, ÷	—	1	
	6 Solve Personal Finance Problems	—	0	
	7. Find Total Dollar Amount/Correct Change	YES	3	
	8. Use Measurement Units	YES	3	
	9. Use Ratio/Proportion/Percent	—	2	
	10. Determine Distance/Location on Maps	YES	4	
	11 Read, Interpret Charts, Graphs	YES	4	YES
	TOTAL OBJECTIVES MASTERED	7	TOTAL ITEMS CORRECT 30	
READING	1. Identify Main Idea	YES	3	
	2. Sequence Events	YES	3	
	3. Perceive Cause-Effect	YES	3	DEMONSTRATED MASTERY OF MINIMUM EXIT LEVEL READING COMPETENCIES
	4 Evaluate Information	YES	3	
	5 Distinguish Fact, Non-fact	—	2	
	6 Draw Conclusions	YES	3	
	7. Make Generalizations	—	2	
	8. Follow Written Directions	YES	4	YES
	9. Use Parts of Book	—	2	
	10 Use Reference Skills	YES	4	
	11 Use Maps, Charts	YES	4	
	TOTAL OBJECTIVES MASTERED	8	TOTAL ITEMS CORRECT 33	
WRITING	1 Spelling	YES	4	
	2 Punctuation	YES	3	
	3 Capitalization	YES	3	
	4 Correct English Usage	—	2	DEMONSTRATED MASTERY OF MINIMUM EXIT LEVEL WRITING COMPETENCIES
	5 Sentence Structure	—	2	
	6 Commonly Used Forms	YES	3	
	OBJECTIVES 1 6 MASTERED	4	TOTAL ITEMS CORRECT 17	NO

WRITTEN COMPOSITION

Organization of Ideas
Approp. Response--Purpose/Audience
Raw Score: 1

Handwriting: ACCEPTABLE

WRITING TEST CONVERTED SCORE: 6

WRITTEN COMPOSITION CONVERTED SCORE: 4

TOTAL WRITING SCORE:10

FIGURE 1

Individual student gummed label

A gummed label, shown in Figure 2, has been provided for every student who took one or more of the TABS tests. This label should be placed on the individual student's permanent record. Each objective is listed by number. Mastery is indicated with a "Y" and non-mastery with an "N."

The student's raw score on the written composition and his/her handwriting rating are displayed on the label.

On the exit level reports, mastery or non-mastery of each of the three tests is shown in the box labeled *total test mastery.*

EXIT LEVEL
ID: 000001

TEST DATE: 02/82

GRADE: 9
BIRTHDATE: 07-14-67

STUDENT: SMITH, PATTI
DISTRICT: 001-001 Bluebonnet
CAMPUS: 001 EASTERN HIGH

OBJECTIVES

TEST	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Total Test Mastery	Total Items Correct
MATHEMATICS	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	30
READING	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	33
WRITING	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Written Comp. '1			Hand Writing *A		N	17

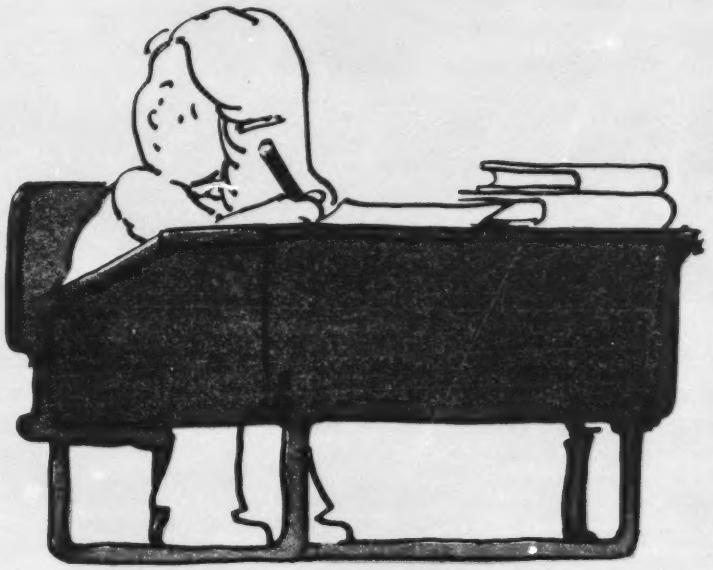
Y = MASTERED
N = NOT MASTERED

1 = RAW SCORE

*A = ACCEPTABLE
B = HARD TO READ

C = ILLEGIBLE
D = NOT RATABLE

FIGURE 2



Interpreting the summary report

Performance results

While individual student results must be kept confidential, student performance results are to be aggregated and reported by campus and district. The summary reports contain two groups of data: (1) aggregations of student performance by campus and district, and (2) totals of the demographic information collected. There are three campus reports and three district reports: campus and district all student reports; campus and district reports for limited English proficiency students; and campus and district reports for non-limited English proficiency students.

As shown in Figure 3, the objectives are listed by ***basic skills areas*** in section 1. The number of ***students tested*** in each subject area is recorded below each set of objectives. The number of students tested may vary among the subject areas because of absences, invalidations, and exemptions.

Sections 2 and 3 are labeled "Mastering." Section 2 includes the *number* of students on the identified campus or district who demonstrated mastery of each objective. Section 3 shows the *percent* of those tested who mastered each objective. Section 4, entitled "Not Mastering," lists the *number* of students not mastering the objective.

For the written composition, the percent of students attaining the various raw scores (R.S. points) is shown in section 5. An explanation of each raw score point (0-4) appears in the appendix.

In addition, the percent of students obtaining each of the handwriting ratings is listed.

In section 6, found only on the exit level reports, the "Mastering" column includes an aggregation of students who met the mastery criterion for each of the three tests. The "Not Mastering" column contains an aggregation of students who did not meet the mastery criteria.

Demographic information

The section of the summary report labeled "Group Characteristics" includes a summary of the demographic information collected on the students tested. Numbers and percents of students are listed for each of the demographic categories. Each percent is that portion of students in each classification based on the total number of students tested. Students exempted, absent, or with invalidated answer sheets for all three tests were not included in the totals for various demographic categories.

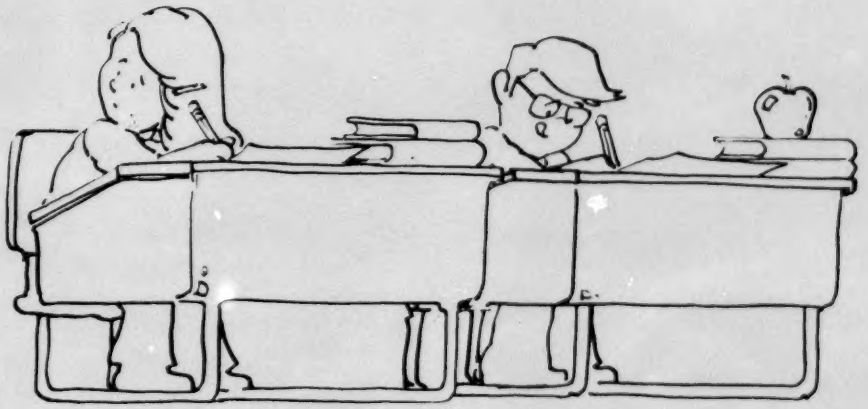
Interpretation of a summary report— An example

When examining the campus summary report for Eastern High School, school personnel should glean the following information:

- In mathematics, Eastern High students are experiencing little difficulty in mastering the basic operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division and with reading and interpreting charts, and graphs. These objectives were mastered by 94 percent or more of Eastern's students. However, many students are experiencing difficulty with the objectives "solve personal finance problems," "use fractions and mixed numbers," and "use ratios, proportions, and percents." Fifty percent or fewer of Eastern High's ninth graders mastered these objectives. The principal should review the results with Eastern's mathematics teachers and plan appropriate changes in instructional strategies. Planning sessions could also include sixth, seventh and eighth grade mathematics teachers who would likely make changes in their instructional goals and/or methods.
- In reading, Eastern's ninth graders had most difficulty on two objectives (63 percent or fewer demonstrated mastery)—

  —make generalizations
  —distinguish fact/non-fact

  Since these skills are related to other content areas such as science and social studies, as well as to English language arts, teachers in those disciplines should be informed of the TABS results. Teaching strategies incorporating those skills can be developed for various content areas.



- In writing, ninth graders at Eastern High had most difficulty on the objective "demonstrate a knowledge of standard punctuation" (67 percent demonstrated mastery). To find out exactly which type of punctuation might have been included on the test, Eastern's principal and English language arts teachers should refer to the previously mentioned document containing TABS objective specifications. A match could be done between the content domain of TABS on punctuation and the school's course content on writing mechanics. Modifications to courses could be made if necessary.

On the written composition 21 percent of Eastern High's ninth graders scored 0 to 1 and only 11 percent scored 3 or 4. These facts should indicate that emphasis should be given to written composition. Content area teachers beside those in English language arts should be encouraged to incorporate written composition into their instructional plans.

TEXAS ASSESSMENT OF BASIC SKILLS
SUMMARY REPORT

CAMPUS: 001 EASTERN HIGH
DISTRICT: 001-901 BLUEBONNET ISD

ALL STUDENTS

REPORT DATE: MAY 1982
DATE OF TESTING: FEBRUARY 1982
GRADE: 9-EXIT LEVEL

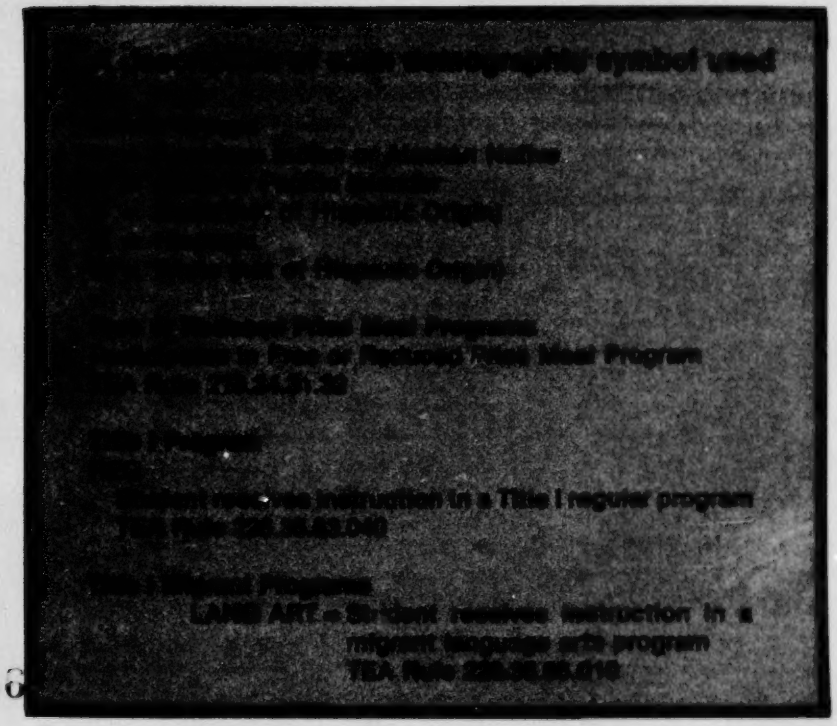
BASIC SKILLS AREAS	OBJECTIVES	MASTERING NUMBER (2)	MASTERING PERCENT (3)	NOT MASTERING NUMBER (4)
MATHEMATICS	1 Add/Subtract Whole Numbers	475	97	15
	2 Multiply/Divide Whole Numbers	470	96	20
	3 Solve Problems +, -, ×, ÷	351	72	139
	4 Use Fractions/Mixed Nos. to +, -, ×	242	49	248
	5. Use Decimals: +, -, X, ÷	293	60	197
	6 Solve Personal Finance Problems	213	43	277
	7. Find Total Dollar Amount/Correct Change	367	75	123
	8 Use Measurement Units	342	70	148
	9 Use Ratio/Proportion/Percent	245	50	245
	10. Determine Distance/Location on Maps	377	77	113
	11 Read, Interpret Charts/Graphs	461	94	29
	STUDENTS TESTED 490 — TOTAL MATHEMATICS (6)	364	75	126
READING	1 Identify Main Idea	351	73	131
	2 Sequence Events	345	72	137
	3 Perceive Cause-Effect	348	72	134
	4 Evaluate Information	362	75	120
	5 Distinguish Fact, Non-fact	302	63	180
	6 Draw Conclusions	323	67	159
	7 Make Generalizations	291	60	191
	8 Follow Written Directions	456	95	26
	9 Use Parts of Book	347	72	135
	10 Use Reference Skills	370	77	112
	11 Use Maps, Charts	369	77	113
	STUDENTS TESTED 482 — TOTAL READING (6)	340	71	142
WRITING	1 Spelling	400	84	78
	2 Punctuation	321	67	157
	3 Capitalization	415	87	63
	4 Correct English Usage	334	70	144
	5 Sentence Structure	389	81	89
	6 Commonly Used Forms	403	84	75
	WRITTEN COMPOSITION (5)			
	Organization of Ideas			
	Approp. Response—Purpose/Audience			
	%R.S. of 4: 3 — %R.S. of 3: 8 — %R.S. of 2: 68 — %R.S. of 1: 19 — %R.S. of 0: 2			
	Handwriting			
	%Acceptable: 96 — %Hard to Read: 3 — %Illegible: 1 — %Not Ratable: 0			
	Students Tested: 478 — Total Writing: (6)	325	68	153

GROUP CHARACTERISTICS		
TOTAL ENROLLMENT	536	
Number Not Tested	36	
	NUMBER	PERCENT
The following data are based on NUMBER OF STUDENTS TESTED:	500	100
ETHNIC COMPOSITION		
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1	0
Asian or Pacific Islander	15	3
Black	103	21
Hispanic	124	25
White	257	51
FREE/REDUCED PRICE MEAL PROGRAM	58	12
TITLE 1 REGULAR PROGRAM	42	8
TITLE I MIGRANT PROGRAMS		
Language Arts Program	23	5
Mathematics Program	15	3
Oral Language Development Program	18	4
Eligible but not Participating	7	1
Neither Eligible nor Participating	470	94
LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY	84	17
BILINGUAL PROGRAM	54	11
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM		
Learning Disability	27	5
Emotionally Disturbed	2	0
Speech Handicapped	3	0
Other Handicapping Condition	5	0
Non Special Education Students	468	94
STATE GIFTED/TALENTED PROGRAM	21	4

FIGURE 3

Demographic summary

This report, displayed in Figure 4, includes a summary of all demographic information collected on students tested. These data are aggregated for each campus and for the district. For each entry (campus or district) the upper row of figures shows the numbers of students tested who fall in each of the specified demographic categories. The lower row includes the percent of students tested who fall in each demographic group.



MATH = Student receives instruction in a migrant mathematics program
TEA Rule 226.35.06.010

OLD = Student receives instruction in a migrant oral language development program
TEA Rule 226.35.06.010

ELIG NOT PART = Student is eligible but does not receive instruction in a Title I migrant program

NOT ELIG = Student is neither eligible nor receiving instruction in a Title I migrant program

Limited English Proficiency

LTD ENG PROF = Student is identified as Limited English Proficient
Chapter 77, Subchapter R, Title 19, Texas Administrative Code

Bilingual Program

BI-LING PROG = Student participates in a bilingual program.*
Chapter 77, Subchapter R, Title 19, Texas Administrative Code

Special Education Program

LD = Learning disability
ED = Emotionally disturbed
SH = Speech handicapped
OH = Other handicapping condition

NON SPEC ED = Student not identified as a special education student

Gifted/Talented Program

STATE G/T PROG = Student participates in a state-funded exemplary program for gifted/talented students
Chapter 19, Subchapter J of the Texas Education Code

*Students participating in a bilingual program or English as a second language (ESL) program are reported in this group.

TEXAS ASSESSMENT OF BASIC SKILLS
DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

DISTRICT: 001-901 BLUEBONNET

REPORT DATE: MAY 1982
DATE OF TESTING: FEBRUARY 1982
GRADE: 9-EXIT LEVEL

ALL STUDENTS

CAMPUS		ENROLLMENT DATA			ETHNIC GROUP					MEAL PROG	TITLE 1 PROGRAM						LTD ENG PROF	BI-LING PROG	SPEC. EDUCATION PROGRAM					STATE G/T PROG
		GR TOT	STU NOT TEST	STU TEST	I	A	B	H	W		REG	MIGRANT PROGRAM							LD	ED	SH	OH	NON SPEC ED	
												LANG ART	MATH	OLD	ELIG NOT PART	NOT ELIG								
001 EASTERN	NUM	536	36	500	1	15	103	124	257	58	42	23	15	18	7	470	84	54	27	2	3	5	468	21
	PCT		7	93	0	3	21	25	51	12	8	5	3	4	1	94	17	11	5	0	0	0	94	4
002 WESTERN	NUM	603	57	546	2	14	152	244	134	135	56	30	18	22	12	510	169	74	35	4	5	6	553	30
	PCT		9	91	0	3	28	45	25	25	10	6	3	4	2	93	31	14	6	1	1	1	92	5
DISTRICT TOTALS																								
	NUM	1139	93	1046	3	29	255	368	391	193	98	53	33	40	19	980	253	128	62	6	8	11	1021	51
	PCT		8	92	0	3	24	35	37	18	9	5	3	4	2	94	24	12	6	1	1	1	90	5

FIGURE 4

Reporting the TABS results

"Student performance data aggregated by campus and district, with appropriate interpretations, shall be reported at the first regularly scheduled meeting after June 1 of the local school board of trustees." (Section 226.3B.070 of the *Administrative Procedures of the Texas State Board of Education.*)

Preparing to release the results

The way in which the TABS results are reported to the public by the superintendent will have a significant impact on the overall usefulness of the results within the district. The superintendent should present a *positive* report which highlights both strengths and weaknesses in student performance. These data will provide a benchmark upon which district plans for instructional improvement can be developed, improvements in student performance can be measured, and staff and patron support can be elicited.

It is suggested that the superintendent prepare the public for the TABS results and fully inform teachers and other staff about TABS. Press releases, newsletters, news briefings, or any other sources deemed appropriate should be employed by the superintendent to inform various audiences about the purpose and background of TABS.

Releasing the results

When releasing the results, the superintendent should include data from the TABS standard reports (i.e. summary reports and demographic summaries by campus and district). These reports contain the aggregated student performance data for mathematics, reading, and writing that school districts are required to make available to the public. Student performance data should be reported by campus and district *with appropriate interpretations.* Explanations of the results within the framework of the district's curriculum, instructional program, and demographic composition should be made to ensure understanding of the results by the board, the staff, and the general public.

To the board of trustees
The board should be informed of the strengths and weaknesses in performance of students in Bluebonnet ISD. The superintendent may discuss the results found on the district summary report objective by objective, highlighting strengths, such as the objective on multiplying and dividing whole numbers. Likewise, Bluebonnet ISD's superintendent should address areas of weakness in mathematics, for example, solving personal finance problems and using ratios, proportions, and percents. As areas where improvement should be made are identified, the superintendent should discuss preliminary plans for correcting deficiencies. The board should select areas of priority and consider possible reallocation of district resources to serve these areas.

To the staff
The superintendent may hold briefings for central office staff, principals, and teachers to discuss the TABS results in detail. To provide an opportunity for informal interaction with the superintendent and a chance for campus personnel to discuss areas of concern, the superintendent may wish to hold a briefing session at each campus involving the entire staff of that campus.

To the public
The superintendent's report on TABS will make an impact on the community. District staff should be prepared to handle questions from the press, school patrons, and other citizens. The superintendent should highlight strengths and weaknesses in each of the three subject areas. This presentation may be accompanied by appropriate demographic information. It is essential that the report be presented within the context of how the results are to be used.

Report to the local board of trustees— An example

Bluebonnet ISD TABS—Mathematics
Exit Level
The subject area performance summary for mathematics indicates unusual strengths in three objective areas. In the area of operations with whole numbers, over 94 percent of the students tested demonstrated mastery. In particular, over 96 percent demonstrated mastery in addition and subtraction of whole numbers. When required to read and interpret charts and graphs, over 93 percent of the students tested mastered the objective.

Weaknesses were apparent in two areas. Students had difficulty in solving personal finance problems, where 45 percent demonsrated mastery of this objective. In using ratio, proportion, and percent, 51 percent of the students tested mastered the objective.

Plans were already in effect to include problem-solving sections in secondary practical mathematics courses for the coming year. In addition, teachers and curriculum specialists are planning and producing district-wide instructional strategies and materials for the coming year. Heavy emphasis will be placed on developing materials that require problem-solving skills.

Staff development programs have been prepared for the fall which are aimed toward new approaches in teaching problem-solving strategies, as well as alternative strategies for teaching those students who did not demonstrate mastery.

Suggestions for interpreting the results

- When reporting results by campus, the demographic characteristics of the student population of that campus should be included.
- If the district obtained optional reports (i.e., student performance data aggregated by certain demographic characteristics), these data may be released along with data from the standard reports.
- Results from other tests administered in the district may be compared with TABS data to note any patterns in student performance.

Use of TABS results

"Each school district shall utilize the student performance data resulting from the assessment instruments...to design and implement appropriate compensatory instructional services for students in the district's schools..." (TEC Section 16.176)

By the superintendent

After the TABS results have been interpreted and reported to the district's various audiences and priority areas have been identified, the superintendent should lay out the district's plans for improvement.

The superintendent should work closely with curriculum specialists in analyzing the district's existing curricula to spot potential areas requiring change. Teaching strategies and instructional materials should be examined.

The superintendent should examine carefully the district's personnel competencies—both instructional and support personnel—to see if the individuals are functioning well in the positions to which they have been assigned.

Existing resources, such as local funds, bilingual, Title I and special projects, should be examined and redeployed if necessary. The superintendent should also examine how state compensatory education funds are being applied.

The superintendent should relate the TABS results to the district's Five-year Priorities Plan in the school accreditation process for improvement of instruction.

By curriculum specialists

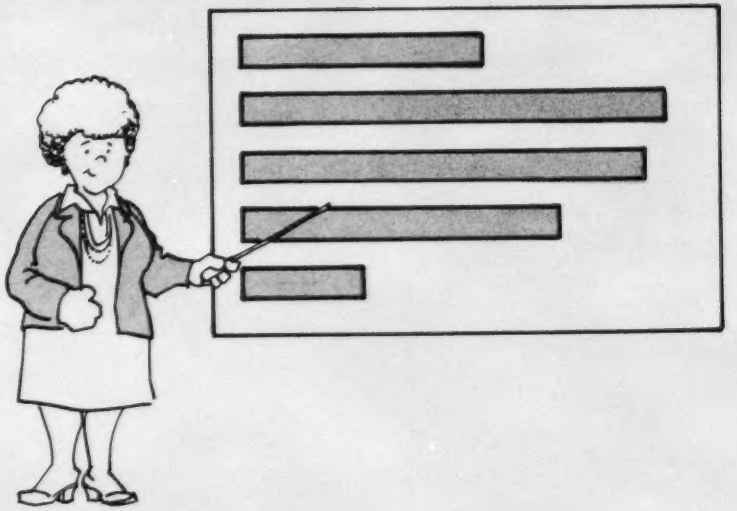
Working with the superintendent and teachers, curriculum specialists should make extensive use of the TABS results in analyzing the district's curricula. Using TABS objectives and specifications, curriculum specialists can match these with the existing curricula of the district. In this way, it can be determined where each objective first appears in the scope and sequence, and at what level the objective is expected to have been mastered. Adjustment may be made in the curricula to emphasize objectives on which student performance was low.

Staff development stressing priority objectives may be conducted to present specific strategies for teaching these objectives.

When possible, specific courses may be designed for secondary students not mastering the competencies measured by the test. An example of such a course is the Basic Reading Skills Course.[8] The skills which a student is expected to have learned upon completing this course include all of those measured on the Exit Level TABS Reading Test.

As shown in Figure 6, the TABS test results are a useful tool in long-range planning. For example, data obtained from the exit level test will assist in curriculum development and instructional improvement for Grades 6, 7, and 8. The data will also provide information on individual students which may be used in planning individual educational programs for students in Grades 10, 11, and 12.

[8]*For details see "English Language Arts Curriculum Framework K-12," TEA Publication, CU0 838 01, Texas Education Agency.*



CURRICULUM PLANNING MODEL

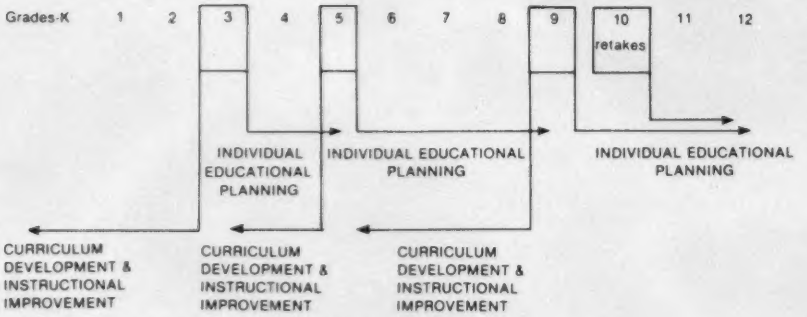


FIGURE 5

By principals

Principals should examine carefully the results for their campuses to identify those areas in which student performance on TABS was low. For example, the principal of Eastern High School, when examining the campus summary (see Figure 2), will notice that ninth graders on the campus did not perform well on the reading objectives "make generalizations" and "distinguish fact, nonfact." These results can be compared with the district results using either the District Summary Report or the Subject Area Performance Summary—Reading to determine if these problem areas are common throughout Bluebonnet ISD or if they are unique to Eastern High School. The district's reading specialist can then devise appropriate teaching strategies which Eastern High School teachers of various disciplines can incorporate into their classes.

By teachers

Teachers should study carefully the TABS results of their students. If patterns of low performance occur, these areas should be marked for intensified group instruction. For example, if many of the students in Tom Brown's mathematics class perform poorly on the objective "solve personal finance problems" as did Patti Smith (see Figure 1), Mr. Brown should allot additional instructional time in this area. He should work closely with the principal, curriculum specialists and fellow mathematics teachers to plan appropriate changes.

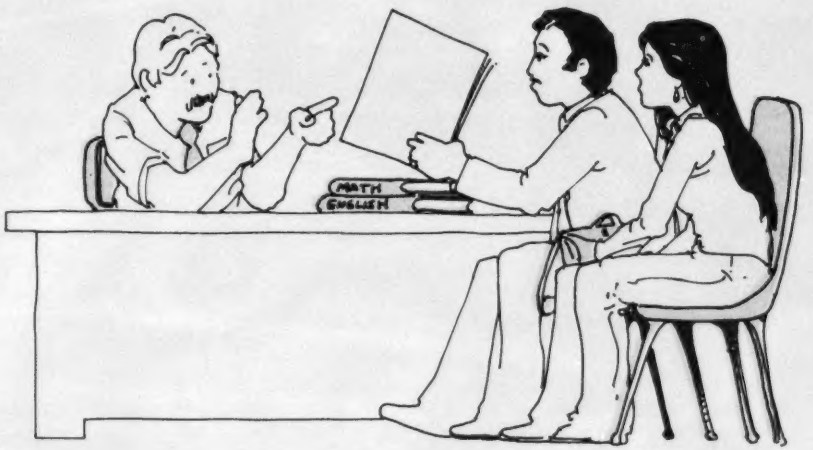
However, if Patti is one of a few students experiencing difficulty in this area, Mr. Brown should design an individual plan of instruction for each of these students.

Additional information

Learning the basic skills is essential, but educators must not reduce efforts to challenge high achieving students. Basic skills instruction should not supplant other effective school programs.

The TABS test can give school personnel, parents and the public an indication of strengths and weaknesses in student performance. The test is not an all-inclusive diagnostic instrument—it is a starting point.

In the State Board of Education priorities "...competence in mathematics, reading and writing (composition) for every citizen, to the fullest extent that capabilities and aspirations permit, is a fundamental aim of elementary and secondary education."[9] The Texas Assessment of Basic Skills will provide information which should move schools one step closer to achieving this goal.



[9] *"Priorities of the State Board of Education," TEA Publication GE1 915 04, Texas Education Agency.*

Additional information on student peformance is essential in eliciting maximum utilization of the TABS results.

For additional information on designing instructional programs using TABS results, districts may contact:

Texas Education Agency
Division of Curriculum Development
201 East Eleventh Street
Austin, Texas 78701
(512) 475-3523 for reading and writing
(512) 475-3523 for mathematics

Assistance in interpreting the TABS results may be obtained by contacting:

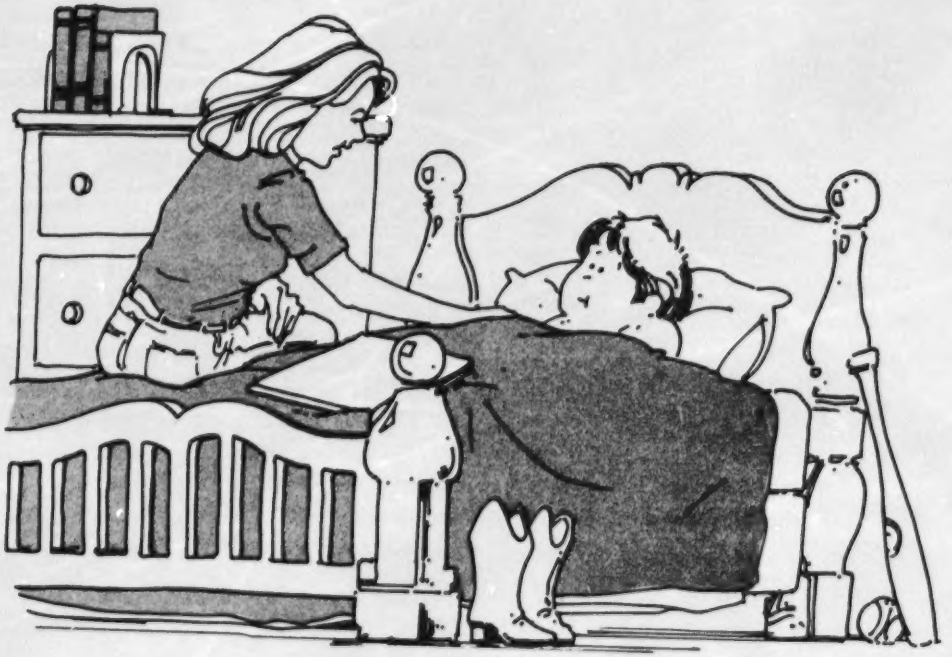
Texas Education Agency
Division of Educational Assessment
201 East Eleventh Street
Austin, Texas 78701
(512) 475-3523

For help with curriculum planning and staff development, districts may contact the Education Service Center for their region.

Documents which should be of use to individuals working with the TABS program are:

- Texas Assessment of Basic Skills Focused Holistic Scoring of TABS Writing Samples, Exit Level
- Texas Assessment of Basic Skills Focused Holistic Scoring of TABS Writing Samples, Grades 3 and 5
- Texas Assessment of Basic Skills Objective Specifications for Mathematics, Reading, and Writing, Grade 3, Grade 5, and Exit Level, CUT 332 01
- Texas Assessment of Basic Skills Instructional Guidelines for Mathematics, Reading, and Writing, Grade 3, CUT 332 02
- Texas Assessment of Basic Skills Sample Test Items, Grade 5 and Exit Level

These publications may be obtained from the Publications Distribution Office, Texas Education Agency, Austin, Texas.



Appendix

Written Composition—Generic scoring guide

Two objectives are the primary focus of the written composition. For Grade 3 these are ogranizing ideas in writing and responding appropriately to a specified topic. For Grade 5 and Exit Level, the objectives are organizing ideas in writing and responding appropriately to purpose and audience. The third objective assessed for all grades is handwriting.

Handwriting legibility is reported with a description of the following levels of legibility:

- acceptable
- hard to read
- illegible
  or
- not ratable

The written composition was scored by two readers using a procedure called focused holistic scoring. It is "focused" because it assesses the student's writing primarily on the two objectives mentioned above. It is "holistic" because it assesses the total piece of writing.

Readers assigned a raw score of 0, 1, 2, 3, or 4 to each student's written composition. The score points are based on characteristics common to expressive, informative, and persuasive writing. The general criteria listed below were delineated in greater detail for scorers based on the type of writing and the item actually assessed at each level. The fact that students' written composition represented first-draft writing was taken into consideration by scorers.

0 The writer's paper is not scorable because it is blank or fails in other ways to respond to the writing assignment; such as papers that address a different topic, that copy or paraphrase the stimulus, that are illegible, that say, "I don't know," or that are written in a language other than English.

1 The writer attempts to address the assignment but attends to the visual/verbal cues in a manner that is not appropriate for the purpose and audience specified*, or the writer produces responses that are incoherent because of garbled syntax, extremely confused details, or errors in using the conventions of writing that are so serious and extensive that they impair meaning.

2 The writer produces a response that is minimally consistent with the verbal/visual cues of the assignment. However, the response is characterized by weaknesses such as being generally undeveloped (i.e., it is skeletal and unelaborated, rambling off the topic, or containing major gaps or inconsistencies that cause the reader confusion).

3 The writer produces a response that is consistent with the verbal/visual cues of the assignment and that contains some elaboration or development of the ideas, events, reasons, perceptions, or other information presented. Elaboration may take such forms as dialogue, specific details, varied choice of words, names of characters or places, explanations, definitions, or illustrations. This response may include minor gaps or inconsistencies, but, generally, these do not cause confusion to the reader.

4 The writer produces a response that is well developed and organized systematically into a unified whole (i.e., the response has such characteristics as a clear beginning and ending and the avoidance of irrelevancies and purposeless repetitions). Elaboration as described above, the use of language, and the arrangement of ideas are sophisticated and promote the overall purpose of the communication.

Third grade students are not expected to address a specified audience.

COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

TITLE VI, CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964; THE MODIFIED COURT ORDER, CIVIL ACTION 5281, FEDERAL DISTRICT COURT, EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS, TYLER DIVISION

Reviews of local education agencies pertaining to compliance with Title VI Civil Rights Act of 1964 and with specific requirements of the Modified Court Order, Civil Action No. 5281, Federal District Court, Eastern District of Texas, Tyler Division are conducted periodically by staff representatives of the Texas Education Agency. These reviews cover at least the following policies and practices:

(1) acceptance policies on student transfers from other school districts;

(2) operation of school bus routes or runs on a non-segregated basis;

(3) nondiscrimination in extracurricular activities and the use of school facilities;

(4) nondiscriminatory practices in the hiring, assigning, promoting, paying, demoting, reassigning, or dismissing of faculty and staff members who work with children;

(5) enrollment and assignment of students without discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin;

(6) nondiscriminatory practices relating to the use of a student's first language; and

(7) evidence of published procedures for hearing complaints and grievances.

In addition to conducting reviews, the Texas Education Agency staff representatives check complaints of discrimination made by a citizen or citizens residing in a school district where it is alleged discriminatory practices have occurred or are occurring.

Where a violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act is found, the findings are reported to the Office for Civil Rights, Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

If there is a direct violation of the Court Order in Civil Action No. 5281 that cannot be cleared through negotiation, the sanctions required by the Court Order are applied.

TITLE VII, CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964; EXECUTIVE ORDERS 11246 AND 11375; TITLE IX, 1973 EDUCATION AMENDMENTS; REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 AS AMENDED; 1974 AMENDMENTS TO THE WAGE-HOUR LAW EXPANDING THE AGE DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT ACT OF 1967; AND VIETNAM ERA VETERANS READJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1972 AS AMENDED IN 1974.

It is the policy of the Texas Education Agency to comply fully with the nondiscrimination provisions of all federal and state laws and regulations by assuring that no person shall be excluded from consideration for recruitment, selection, appointment, training, promotion, retention, or any other personnel action, or be denied any benefits or participation in any programs or activities which it operates on the grounds of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, handicap, age, or veteran status (except where age, sex, or handicap constitute a bona fide occupational qualification necessary to proper and efficient administration). The Texas Education Agency makes positive efforts to employ and advance in employment all protected groups.